(e) the corrective measures taken by Government to tackle this dreaded virus from spreading out in the country, particularly States which are recognized as foreign tourists' destination like Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As on 30th June, 2009 there have been 109 laboratory confirmed cases of Influenza A H1N1 [swine] in our country.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) On World Health Organization informing about the influenza A/H1N1 [earlier referred as Swine Flu], Government of India took a series of actions. A comprehensive plan including guidelines and standard operating procedures were put in place. Travel advisory was issued to defer non essential travel to the affected countries. Entry screening of passengers started at 22 international airports and five international checkpoints through an informative health screening card and is still continuing. On an average 45,000 passengers are screened daily. About 27 lakh passengers have been screened. 211 passengers with symptoms were isolated in identified health facilities and tested for influenza A/H1N1 infection. The communication efforts have resulted in nearly 500 passengers with symptoms self reporting [as on 30th June, 2009].

All States have been requested to gear up the State machinery and strengthen isolation facilities including critical care facilities at district level. In addition to trained rapid response teams and team of physicians at state level, district level teams are undergoing training to investigate outbreak and to manage them. Professional bodies such as Indian Medical Association, Indian Academy of Pediatrics and National Academy of Medical Sciences have been involved for continuing medical education of doctors in the private sector.

Government is fully geared up to deal with the situation.

Storage of procured wheat stock

*35. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether wheat procurement in the on-going rabi season has surpassed last year's record while the old stocks still block godowns;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the capacity of various godowns of FCI is not in a position to stock fresh wheat stocks; and

(d) if so, the strategies being adopted by FCI/Government to store the fresh wheat stocks?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) In Rabi Marketing Season 2009-10, a quantity of 248.8 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured till 30.6.2009 as against 226.89 lakh tonnes procured in RMS 2008-09. At the start of wheat procurement in RMS 2009-10, 131.7 lakh tonnes of wheat procured in previous years was available in the central Pool. Due to record procurement of wheat in RMS 2009-10 and of rice in KMS 2008-09, shortage of covered space has been experienced by FCI and state agencies. In order to address the problem of shortage of storage capacity, various steps have been taken by FCI and State agencies which, *inter-alia*, include hiring of additional storage space, direct dispatch from mandis to consuming States and storage of new stocks in Cover and Plinth (CAP) storage.

Government policy on tackling Swine Flu

*36. SHRI SUBHASH PRASAD YADAV: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Swine Flu (H1N1 virus) has been declared a pandemic;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of people affected;

(c) the measures initiated and proposed to be initiated to check its spread in the country;

(d) the number of hospitals equipped in the country to handle it; and

(e) the policy guidelines of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. World Health Organisation [WHO] raised the pandemic alert level from Phase 5 to Phase 6 on 11th June, 2009. As per the WHO assessment, the overall severity of Influenza pandemic is moderate. The disease has as on 29th June, 2009, spread to 116 countries with 70893 laboratory confirmed cases and 311 deaths. In our country, the first case was reported on 13th May, 2009. Since then there have been 109 laboratory confirmed cases of Influenza A H1N1 [swine].

(c) On World Health Organization informing about the influenza A/H1N1 [earlier referred as Swine Flu], Government of India took a series of actions. A comprehensive plan including guidelines and standard operating procedures were put in place. Travel advisory was issued to defer non essential travel to the affected countries. Entry screening of passengers started at 22 international airports and five international checkpoints through an informative health screening card and still continuing. On an average, 45,000 passengers are screened daily. About 27 lakh passengers have been screened. 211 passengers with symptoms were isolated in identified health facilities and tested for influenza A/H1N1 infection. The communication efforts have resulted in nearly 500 passengers with symptoms self reporting [as on 30th June, 2009].